



Italy Is Filled With Prosperity and Discontent; Strikes and Foreign Disputes Delay Demobilization

Prices of Food and Clothing Are Abnormally High, But Everybody Has Money

By Arthur S. Draper

From The Tribune's European Bureau
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IN THE middle of May Italian affairs reached a climax and the Nitti government collapsed, the Clericals defeating him on a minor issue.

To-day khaki has almost disappeared from the streets of London. In Paris comparatively few soldiers are seen, but Rome gives every appearance of a city still at war. On nearly every corner one or two soldiers, revolvers strapped around their waists, stand as if looking for trouble. Gendarmes are everywhere. On the streets and in the hotels officers in brilliant uniforms, with swords swinging, move about, as if anticipating a fresh call to arms. Perhaps it is all display, but it serves to create the impression that either Italy has demobilized her armies extremely slowly or that she intends to make show of force for some reason or other.

Delay in the Mails

I went into a telegraph office and inquired how long it would take a message to reach London. The girl who was acting as clerk said the delay was indefinite. At one of the travel agencies the manager told me that he had just received a telegram from Florence, dated three days back. Letters were being received from London three weeks after they had been posted. The Rome correspondent of a London newspaper received a telegram of instructions six days after it had been filed. A London newspaper received a dispatch, describing the funeral of Bissolatti, the Italian statesman, but the message telling of his death never arrived in London. Volunteer letter carriers, unfamiliar with the city, were attempting to replace the strikers in the postoffice and telegraph bureaus the day I arrived. This was a strike against the government, and it had succeeded in embarrassing the general public beyond description.

Traveling from Paris to Rome on an express we had the unpleasant experience of being dumped off at the Italian frontier by the French porters of the sleeping cars, who, though they preserved the reputation of their race for courtesy, were firm in their determination not to permit any one to remain in his berth after 3 o'clock in the morning, the hour of our arrival at Modane, in the Alps. From the Paris express we were transferred to an Italian first-class through train to Rome.

No Water on the Train

Except for the water in the engine, there was not a drop aboard the train. All the mirrors had been removed. No dining car or buffet was available. The only uniform of the guards was their cap. A member of the league of nations (an Englishman, it is hardly necessary to state) used white wine to make a lather to shave. Incidentally he does not recommend it highly. For hours and hours we rode, with no opportunity to get any water or anything to eat. It was not until we reached Turin that we had breakfast of black coffee and equally black bread. Six hours later we had lunch at Genoa—a real meal—an opportunity to wash under a faucet. No dirtier, more villainous looking crowd of first class passengers ever arrived at Rome at 1:30 o'clock in the morning. But then there was no one to blame except the French and Italian railwaymen who were on strike.

Turin has long been famous for its vermouth; it has now acquired a reputation for radicalism. A few weeks ago the metal workers there decided the time had come to set up a local soviet, a modified form of Lenin Bolshevism. Things developed quickly, and troops were hurried there. The experiment failed. Conditions were still far from normal when we arrived, though there had been no recent outbreaks. Milan, another industrial center some ninety miles northeast of Turin, had also experimented in Bolshevism.

Possibly Bolshevism is not quite the proper word; the Italians might prefer to describe the situation as one in which the workers attempted to introduce a labor dictatorship. They are mighty cautious in their use of words relating to industrial conditions in Europe these days.

Raised the Red Flag

Recently there was an interesting outbreak at Viareggio, where two rival football teams met in a friendly game. Communist and fascist

enthusiasm ran high. The referee gave a decision which aroused the ire of the crowd. A free fight followed and in the mêlée the referee was killed. Excitement reached the fever point. A company of fifty armed soldiers hastened to the scene. There they met a crowd of close to a thousand threatening citizens, who informed the soldiers they would be killed if they tried to use force, but that if they would surrender their guns and be good fellows they would be permitted to enter the town after the funeral of the referee. The soldiers showed discretion. All the town youngsters took turns at using the rifles for shooting at birds in the pine woods,

VICTOR EMMANUEL,
King of Italy

ITALY'S royal children, left to right, Princess Giovanna, Princess Maria, Princess Yolanda, Crown Prince Umberto and Princess Mafalda.



ELENA, Queen of Italy

Signor Nitti, in Spite of Frequent Crises, Has Faith in the Country's Future

in March and a cabinet reshuffling. It was not a serious affair, but indicative of political unrest. No one expected the reorganized cabinet to live long, and consequently the recent downfall of the government occasioned no surprise. With the Socialist and Catholic parties—the largest groups in Parliament—unrepresented in the government, it could exist only on sufferance. If the Socialists alone had remained in opposition, Nitti's position would have been secure. Signor Bonomi, former Socialist leader, was a member of the government, but his appointment brought no real Socialist support. In the present crisis it has been apparent that the Clericals would not support him as Prime Minister, though he was acceptable

some have appeared as public orators against it.

Nitti's policy toward radicalism was "half a dozen of one and half a dozen of the other." He was too reactionary for the radicals, too liberal for the other wing. His middle course, his attempts to govern by moderation, made him no friends among the Catholics, or, in fact, the Socialists. The Clericals, who were frequently the representatives of the business interests, believed he was pursuing a policy of drift and that they would awaken one morning to find the country in a state of revolution. Nitti contended that if he always resorted to force the inevitable result would be just what the Catholics feared. He urged moderation as the best guaranty of ultimate economic and political stability.

Nitti's recall to leadership of the country after his Parliamentary defeat makes him stronger than before the crisis, but, until a new election is held, the Italian government must necessarily be a makeshift. It must also be a coalition government containing Catholic representation; otherwise the Catholics can always gather enough votes from other groups to form a dominating opposition. Nitti wanted to be known as "the Indispensable." What will happen at the next election no one can foretell, but it is safe to expect that the Socialists will have a hard fight to hold their present representation in Parliament. On the other hand, the Socialist leaders believe that they will not only hold their present seats but make new and considerable gains, basing their prophecies on the unrest in the country.

Asked a Republic

Among the many demands of the Socialists is that Italy become a republic, but it is only a detail in a long program. Even the Socialists are rather cool about the republic idea. I was informed that King Victor Emmanuel had been asked to become President of a republic, and that he had stated he would prefer to retire to private life. This report came from a person who should be well informed, but I give it for what it is worth, as I was unable to verify it in any other quarter.

Recognition of Clericals

Nitti's new government contains Signor Micheli, Minister of Agriculture, and Signor Rodino, Minister of War, both of whom are members of the Catholic group. Its program is a compromise to meet the demands of the Clericals. The Catholics had insisted on a recognition of their organizations, the restoration of discipline in the public service, especially in the postal, telegraphic and railway services, and reforms in land legislation and taxes.

Political experts say that Nitti was perfectly willing to have his government fall, confident in the belief that he would be returned again, because no one else could gather a majority around him and form a new government. The adverse vote came on a minor domestic issue in a poorly attended session. It was not a fair verdict on the Nitti policy.

If the vote had been on Nitti's foreign policy, the result would unquestionably have been in his favor. Nitti could always command a large majority on any issue growing out of his German and Russian policies, and his handling of the Adriatic problem was generally satisfactory.

During the war the Vatican made many mistakes, but it is retrieving them in a marvelous manner. Even though the Catholic Popular party refused to support Nitti, the relations between the Italian government and the Holy See were fairly harmonious. The canonization of Jeanne d'Arc had a political significance of no small importance. The fact that France now has a papal representative after all these years is an amazing thing, when one considers the French policy toward the Vatican at the time the Pope tried to intervene in the war. It is no secret that the Vatican did not anticipate a crushing German and Austro-Hungarian defeat.

The Vatican's Political Wisdom

There is a wonderful political vision within the Vatican. That the Clericals, who receive valued advice from the Vatican, should fear and fight the growth of radicalism, extreme socialism, in Italy is natural. In other countries prominent members of the Roman Catholic clergy have not only used their influence

Understanding With Germany

The British Premier was quick to decide on a moderate policy toward Germany, but not quicker than Nitti.



PHOTOS BY INTERNATIONAL

CAVALRY charging through the streets of Milan to put an end to a strike disturbance

and for forty-eight hours there was an almost continuous fusillade of firing.

During this period a red flag was run up and a soviet formed. The military became alarmed and sent a small army to Viareggio. A couple of generals and other high officers visited the soviet leaders, who informed them they must remain outside the town limits until the referee was buried. They waited. A torpedo boat containing a Socialist deputy arrived in the harbor, but even he was unwelcome. The referee buried, the citizens of Viareggio hauled down the red flag and cheered the troops as they marched into the town.

Before the war the Italian laborer received a wage which barely supported him and his family. If we take the average wage of the American workman in 1914 and call it 10, the Briton received 7, the Frenchman 5 and the Italian 2. To-day the Italian, using the same standard, is getting 20; he believes in making hay while the sun shines, and it is brilliant here now. Of the workers I have seen in Europe those of Britain, France, Holland and Belgium, the Italian are the best dressed to-day, or perhaps it would be nearer the point to say that they are wearing the best quality of clothes, hats and boots. In the parks of Rome, for instance, the famous Villa Umberto I, the workers and their families are conspicuous.

A Mental Change

At the impressive and spectacular ceremony of the canonization of Jeanne d'Arc in St. Peter's it is estimated that at least 50,000 pilgrims were present, nine-tenths of whom were workers on a holiday. It was a particularly well dressed throng that came to see the Pope and the religious ceremony.

An Englishman who has spent the last twenty years in Italy, most of it in Rome, tells me the change in the last year in the dress of the masses, in their manner of seeking amusement and entertainment, and in their home life is astounding to

tion and comes into close contact with many Italians desirous of emigrating. In his opinion the mental attitude of the workers is changing rapidly.

Prices are frightfully high, considerably higher even than those in Paris and almost double those of London. To English or Americans who are now able to sell pounds or dollars at three to four times their normal value prices are comparatively reasonable, but the middle class Italian with a fixed income finds living a perplexing problem. I quote the prices of a few dishes at a restaurant: Soup, 3.50 francs (normally 70 cents); roast beef, 12 francs (normally \$2.40); potatoes au gratin, 4 francs (normally 80 cents); strawberry tart, 4 francs; coffee, 3 francs (normally 60 cents). Of course, these are restaurant prices and, consequently, much higher than those in the shops and markets. Vegetables and fruits are now plentiful. There is a scarcity of grain, bread being still rationed, though in England and France all restrictions were removed long ago. Meat is scarce and the quality poor. Clothes, especially men's suits, cost almost as much as in New York, if the prices are figured at the normal rate of exchange, the only fair way of making comparison when figuring from the native's viewpoint. A straw hat of good quality sells for 60 francs (normally \$10); a pair of men's shoes costs 100 francs (normally \$20); sack suits range in price from 450 francs (normally \$90) upward.

Everybody Has Money

Despite these abnormal conditions every one seems to manage to make ends meet and few complaints are heard on this score. At this season there is a flower vendor on nearly every corner, and they are apparently doing a brisk trade, a certain sign that there is money about. On the other hand, the souvenir sellers and the guides, who form a small army in Rome, complain that business is poor, but then they reap their harvest from foreigners—



PREMIER NITTI, to whom has fallen the difficult task of guiding Italy through the period of reconstruction.

mans—and thus far comparatively few have arrived.

During the last week the news vendors have been racing through the streets, shouting the latest development in the political crisis. The people have been buying each of the many editions of the newspapers, but there has been really little sign of excitement.

Forms New Cabinet

Nitti tried to combine moderation and force in equal proportions. He followed in some measure the British policy of permitting extremists to blow off their steam, the public gatherings serving as a political safety valve.

Nowhere in Europe is the political situation more uncertain than in Italy. Signor Nitti has just formed a new government after a week of political maneuvering during which Signor Bonomi tried in vain to obtain a Parliamentary majority. Nitti fell on a domestic issue of minor importance. The new government contains four Radicals, six Liberal Democrats and two members of the Catholic Popular party; but it is the general opinion that the Italian situation will remain critical until after the election in the fall. With the exception of Nitti himself the

is Signor Scialoja, the Foreign Minister.

[This article was written before the dispatch of June 9 announcing still another Cabinet crisis and another Nitti resignation.]

Signor Nitti succeeded Signor Orlando. He is considered the clearest-sighted leader in Italian politics. When Orlando fell, it was a question whether his successor would be Nitti or Signor Tittoni, Foreign Secretary for many years while Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance. Tittoni declared in July, 1914, that Austria's declaration of war on Serbia was a clear breach of the defensive clauses of the Triple Alliance. Nitti has never shown active interest in foreign policy; he was essentially an economist and was responsible for a system of state monopolies, many of which were decidedly unpopular but nevertheless successful. The struggle was close and Nitti became Premier and Tittoni Foreign Minister, the latter succeeding Baron Sonnino. Incidentally, Tittoni has been Italy's representative on the council of the league of nations, having acted as chairman during the conference here. Apparently, this was an excellent combination for handling economic, colonial and general trade problems.



A GIRL substitute letter carrier delivering mail in Rome during the general strike there recently

brought only a temporary lull in the political storm. Nitti showed, at the Paris peace negotiations, that he favored a more moderate policy than that of Orlando and Sonnino. He played the game much like Lloyd George, attacking and retreating, bargaining and compromising. His were not the unyielding, waiting tactics of Clemenceau. Early in his political leadership the spectacular d'Annunzio arose to embarrass Nitti by his dramatic stroke at Fiume.

There are those who say Nitti encouraged d'Annunzio, but I can find no one here who supports that charge. On the contrary, every one says that Nitti was strongly opposed to d'Annunzio's adventure.

Trouble on Every Hand

Meanwhile, the extreme Socialist agitation was growing. Economic conditions were bad. The Socialist wing did everything in its power to increase the difficulties of the Nitti government. The Premier encountered difficulties in the Supreme Council negotiations, in the Italian Parliament and in fact, at every turn. No prominent Nationalist or Socialist was included in his first cabinet. Always, Signor Giolitti, now seventy-six years old, but remarkably strong, physically and mentally, was to be reckoned with. The Bissolattins, whose leader died recently, disliked Nitti politically. Thus, he came into power under extremely trying conditions.

Then came the election. More than a hundred and fifty Socialists were returned, a surprisingly large number so soon after the armistice, when in most European countries there was a reaction from the extreme radicalism of the previous year. The Socialist political machine was well organized—a fact which was not thoroughly appreciated by other parties until after the election. The result of the election could not be ignored.

Nitti adopted a policy of opportunism at home, but never for a moment did he abandon his big project for reorganizing Italy economically. I have talked with his political friends and enemies and they were almost unanimous in their support of his general policy, however much they attacked his management of domestic affairs.